



Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office

Operations Directorate — Fact Sheet

ISSUE: Department of Defense Directive 2310.2, Personnel Recovery.

BACKGROUND: Chapter 76 of the FY 96 Defense Authorization Act, commonly referred to as the “Missing Persons Act,” directed the Secretary of Defense to, “establish within the Office of the Secretary of Defense an office to have responsibility for Department of Defense policy relating to missing persons.” It directed that the responsibilities of the office include, “policy, control, and oversight within the Department of Defense of the entire process for investigation and recovery related to missing persons (including matters related to search, rescue, escape, and evasion); and coordination with other departments and agencies of the United States on all matters concerning missing persons.” The Missing Persons Act states that the office “shall be responsible for the coordination of such purposes within the Department of Defense among the military departments, the Joint Staff, and the commanders of the combatant commands . . . and shall establish policies which shall apply uniformly throughout the Department of Defense, for personnel recovery (including search, rescue, escape, and evasion).”

On October 3, 1996 in a letter, “Office of Missing Personnel Implementation Initiatives,” the USD(P) designated the DASD(POW/MIA) as the DASD for Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Affairs. He realigned functional responsibility for personnel recovery from the ASD(SO/LIC) to the ASD(ISA), for further delegation to the DASD(POW/Missing Personnel Affairs).

DISCUSSION: In order to begin to fulfill its new responsibilities for personnel recovery, DPMO promulgated DoD Directive 2310.2, “Personnel Recovery,” which establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for personnel recovery. The Deputy Secretary of Defense signed the Directive on June 30, 1997. DPMO’s responsibilities include:

- a. Promulgate personnel recovery policy; provide policy guidance and recommendations on personnel recovery; and determine personnel recovery requirements for DoD policies, strategic guidance, planning, and capabilities.
- b. Evaluate the policies, processes, and programs that impact on the DoD ability to execute personnel recovery operations; initiate actions, as necessary, that shall enhance the capabilities of personnel recovery assets; and ensure optimum effectiveness of the DoD Executive Agent for personnel recovery, including joint and/or multi-Service support for resources.
- c. Coordinate with the ASD(SO/LIC) on special operations activities for personnel recovery.
- d. Establish a Personnel Recovery Response Cell (PRRC) for activation during personnel recovery incidents and exercise the PRRC periodically to ensure that procedures and coordination channels are current and functional.
- e. Represent the Department of Defense at all inter-agency fora on personnel recovery matters.
- f. Coordinate with the General Counsel of the Department of Defense concerning all legal issues, and legal status of personnel covered by this Directive.
- g. Ensure that DoD joint personnel recovery doctrine is distributed to other U.S. Government Agencies that have personnel assigned abroad.

Since publishing the initial Directive, we have seen many changes in the personnel recovery function and learned numerous lessons regarding DoD policy on personnel recovery. As a result, DPMO undertook a major revision of DoD Directive 2310.2 and it went out for formal coordination on July 30, 1999.